

AUTOMATED LICENSE PLATE READER

POLICY & PROCEDURE NO. 255	ISSUE DATE: November 23, 2011
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MASSACHUSETTS POLICE ACCREDITATION STANDARDS REFERENCED: None	REVISION DATE: _____

I. GENERAL CONSIDERATIONS AND GUIDELINES

The availability and use of automated license plate reader (LPR) systems provide many opportunities for the enhancement of law enforcement productivity, effectiveness, and officer safety. The purpose of this policy is to provide officers with guidelines on the proper use of LPR systems.

II. POLICY

It is the policy of this department that all members abide by the guidelines set forth herein when using LPR systems.

III. DEFINITIONS

- A. Alert:** A visual and/or auditory notice that is triggered when the LPR system receives a potential “hit” on a license plate.
- B. Fixed LPR System:** LPR cameras that are permanently affixed to a structure, such as a pole, a traffic barrier or a bridge.
- C. FOUO:** Official Use Only.
- D. Hit:** A read matched to a plate that has previously been registered on an agency’s “hot list” of vehicle plates related to stolen vehicles, wanted vehicles, or other factors supporting investigation, or which has been manually registered by a user for further investigation.

- E. *Hot List:*** License plate numbers of stolen cars, vehicles owned by persons of interest, and vehicles associated with AMBER Alerts that are regularly added to “hot lists” circulated among law enforcement agencies. Hot list information can come from a variety of sources, including stolen vehicle information from the National Insurance Crime Bureau and the National Crime Information Center (NCIC), as well as national AMBER Alerts and Department of Homeland Security watch lists. Departments of motor vehicles can provide lists of expired registration tags, and law enforcement agencies can interface their own, locally compiled hot lists to the LPR system. These lists serve an officer safety function as well as an investigatory purpose. In addition to agency supported hot lists, users may also manually add license plate numbers to hot lists in order to be alerted if and when a vehicle license plate of interest is “read” by the LPR system.
- F. *LPR:*** License Plate Recognition/License Plate Reader.
- G. *Mobile LPR System:*** LPR cameras that are affixed, either permanently (hardwired) or temporarily (e.g., magnet-mounted), to a law enforcement vehicle for mobile deployment.
- H. *OCR:*** Optical Character Recognition.
- I. *Portable LPR System:*** LPR cameras that are transportable and can be moved and deployed in a variety of venues as needed, such as a traffic barrel or speed radar sign.
- J. *Read:*** Digital images of license plates and vehicles and associated metadata (e.g., date, time and geographic coordinates associated with the vehicle image capture) that are captured by the LPR system.

IV. PROCEDURES

A. GENERAL

1. The Use of LPR systems is restricted to public safety-related missions of this agency.
2. LPR systems and associated equipment and databases are authorized for official public safety purposes. Misuse of this equipment and associated databases, or data, may be subject to sanctions and/or disciplinary actions.
3. LPR systems and LPR data and associated media are the property of this agency and intended for use in conducting official business with limited exceptions noted elsewhere in this policy.

B. Administration

1. The Patrol Division Commander shall oversee the LPR Function.

2. The Traffic Enforcement Supervisor shall oversee the maintenance and operation of LPR equipment to ensure functionality and camera alignment. Any equipment that falls outside expected functionality shall be removed from service until deficiencies have been corrected.
3. LPR systems repairs, hardware or software, shall be made by agency authorized sources.

C. License Plate Reader System Usage

1. LPR operation and access to LPR collected data shall be for official agency purposes only.
2. Only officers who have been properly trained in the use and operational protocols of the LPR systems shall be permitted to use it.
3. At the start of each shift, users must ensure that the LPR system has been updated with the most current hot lists available and is properly functioning. Malfunctioning equipment shall be reported to the Traffic Supervisor.
4. LPR Alerts/Hits: Prior to initiation of the stop:
 - a. Visually verify that the vehicle plate number matches the plate number run by the LPR system, including both alphanumeric characters of the license plate and the state of issuance; and
 - b. Verify the current status of the plate through dispatch or MDT query when circumstances allow.
5. In each case in which an alert or a hit is triggered, the user should record the disposition of the alert and the hit into the LPR system.
6. Hot lists may be updated manually if the user enters a specific plate into the LPR system and wants to be alerted when that plate is located. Whenever a plate is manually entered into the LPR system, the officer should document the reason.
7. Special Details: LPR use during nontraditional deployments (e.g., special operations or during a criminal investigation) must be approved by the shift supervisor.
8. Searches of historical data within the LPR system should be done in accordance with established departmental policies and procedures.

D. LPR Data Sharing and Dissemination:

1. LPR data should be considered FOUO and can be shared for legitimate law enforcement purposes.
2. When LPR data are disseminated outside the agency, it should be documented by the dispatcher in a log entry.

3. Information sharing among agencies should be dictated in accordance with MOUs (memoranda of understanding) or established departmental policies.

E. Retention: Data collected by the LPR which is uploaded to the server shall be retained for a period of three (3) months or until overwritten by the server.